Unionization 2010

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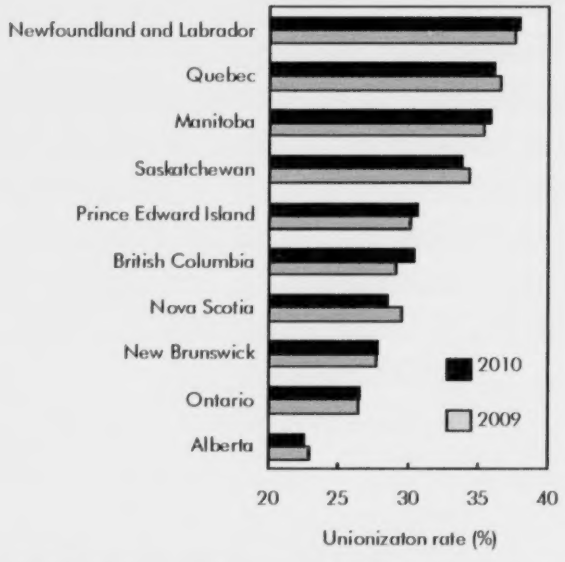
Unionization rates in the first half of 2009 and 2010

Average paid employment (employees) during the first half of 2010 was 14.3 million, an increase of 171,000 over the same period one year earlier (Table 1). The number of unionized employees also increased by 64,000 (to 4.2 million). However, since union membership rose slightly more rapidly than employment, the unionization rate edged up from 29.5% in 2009 to 29.6% in 2010.

As women experienced disproportionately more gains in unionized jobs, their unionization rate rose to 30.9%. The unionization rate for men remained constant at 28.2%. As a result, the gap in the rates between men and women widened further in 2010.

As with overall job gains, gains in unionized jobs were spread over full-time and part-time jobs. Unionization among full-time workers increased to 31.1%. The unionization rate of part-time workers rose to 23.5% in 2010.

Chart A Newfoundland and Labrador, the most unionized province; Alberta, the least



Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, January-to-June averages.

The unionization rate for permanent employees increased to 30.0%. However, it decreased to 27.3% for those in non-permanent jobs. Between 2009 and 2010, the unionization rate rose in larger firms (100 employees or more), decreased for those with 20 to 99 employees, and remained constant for firms with fewer than 20 employees.

Data sources

Information on union membership, density and coverage by various sociodemographic characteristics, including earnings, are from the Labour Force Survey. Further details can be obtained from Marc Lévesque, Labour Statistics Division, Statistics Canada, 613-951-4090. Data on strikes, lockouts and workdays lost, and those on major wage settlements were supplied by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC). Further information on these statistics may be obtained from Client Services, Workplace Information Directorate, HRSDC, 1-800-567-6866.

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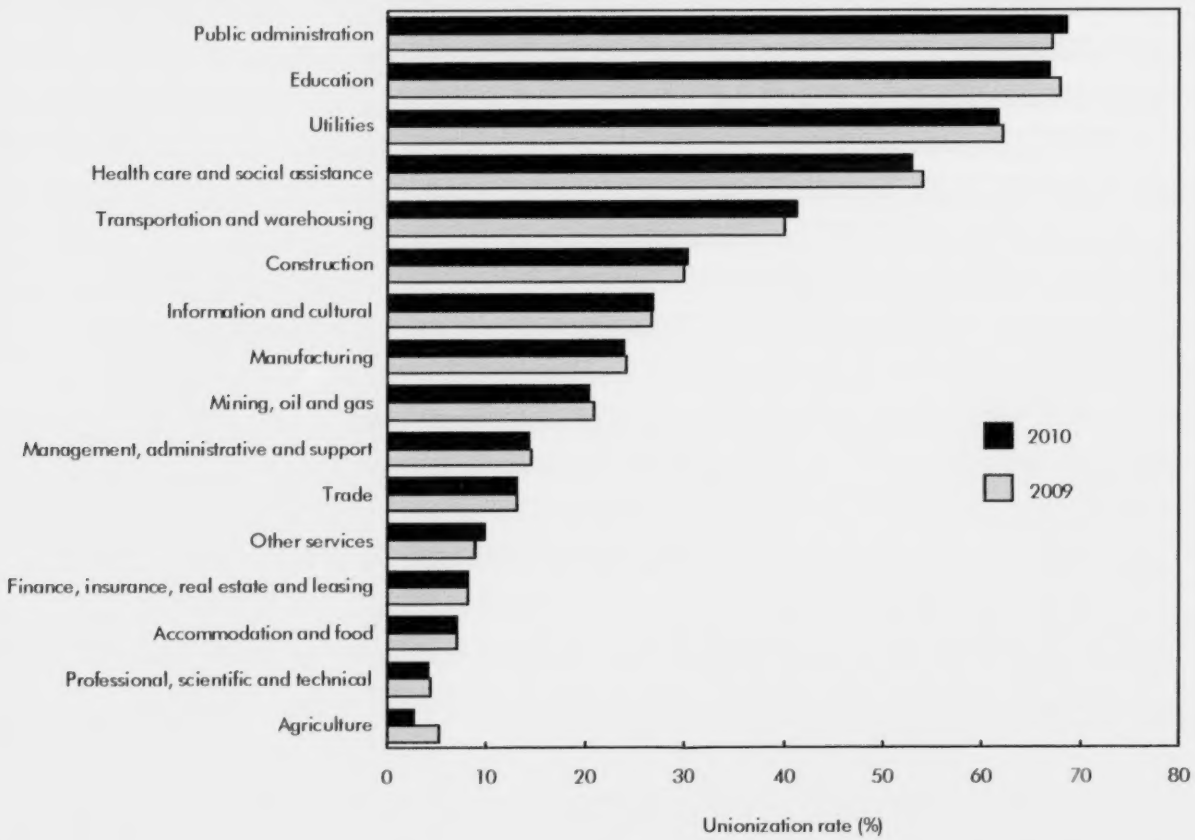
The provincial picture was more mixed (Chart A). Six provinces recorded increases in their unionization rates, British Columbia being the one with the largest increase. In contrast, unionization decreased in Nova Scotia, Quebec, Saskatchewan and Alberta.

Changes in unionization rates varied across industries. Notable declines were observed in agriculture, health care and social assistance, and education. Notable increases occurred in transportation and warehousing, and public administration. (Chart B).

Chart B The highest unionization rates were in public sector industries

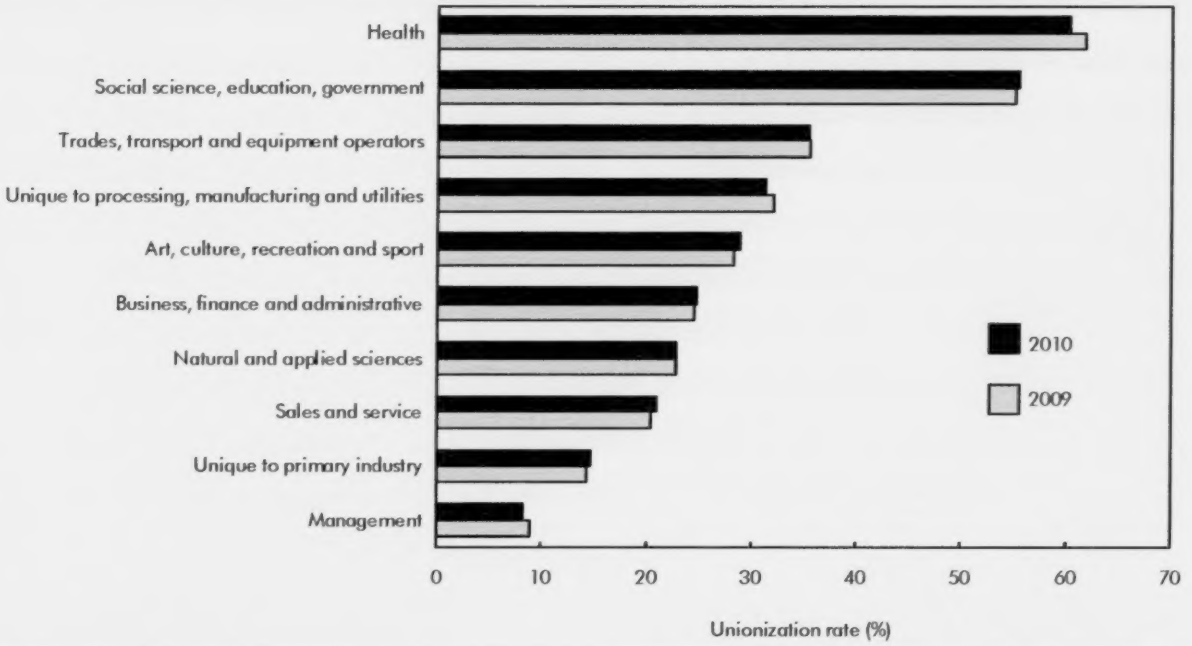


Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, January-to-June averages.

Changes in the unionization rate also varied across 10 major occupational groups (Chart C). Unionization declined most in health and management, and among occupations unique to processing, manufacturing and utilities. The unionization rate also declined in trades, transport and equipment operator occupations. Conversely, it rose in art, culture, recreation and sport occupations, and sales and service. Changes in the unionization rate were more modest among other major occupational categories.

Finally, the number of employees who were not union members but were covered by a collective agreement averaged 288,000 in the first half of 2010, a decrease from last year's total of 300,000.

Chart C Unionization in community service occupations far outpaced that in others



Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, January-to-June averages.

Table 1 Union membership and coverage by selected characteristics

	2009			2010		
	Total employees	Union density		Total employees	Union density	
		Members	Coverage[1]		Members	Coverage[1]
	'000	%	%	'000	%	%
Both sexes	**14,087**	**29.5**	**31.6**	**14,258**	**29.6**	**31.6**
Men	6,963	28.2	30.4	7,049	28.2	30.4
Women	7,123	30.8	32.9	7,209	30.9	32.8
Sector[2]						
Public	3,423	71.3	75.1	3,509	71.2	74.8
Private	10,664	16.1	17.7	10,749	16.0	17.5
Age						
15 to 24	2,321	14.7	16.5	2,281	14.9	16.5
25 to 54	9,800	31.9	34.1	9,920	32.0	34.1
25 to 44	6,415	29.4	31.6	6,475	30.0	32.2
45 to 54	3,385	36.6	38.8	3,445	35.8	37.8
55 and over	1,966	35.2	37.3	2,057	34.4	36.3
Education						
Less than Grade 9	289	24.4	26.4	277	24.0	25.3
Some high school	1,344	20.1	21.6	1,295	20.4	22.0
High school graduation	2,788	25.3	26.9	2,858	25.7	27.0
Some postsecondary	1,229	21.6	23.3	1,205	22.6	24.6
Postsecondary certificate or diploma	5,003	33.2	35.6	5,032	33.3	35.4
University degree	3,434	34.5	37.1	3,591	33.6	36.3
Province						
Atlantic	954	30.5	32.0	954	30.3	31.7
Newfoundland and Labrador	189	37.5	39.3	193	37.9	39.7
Prince Edward Island	58	30.1	32.6	58	30.7	33.0
Nova Scotia	388	29.5	30.8	388	28.4	29.6
New Brunswick	319	27.7	29.1	314	27.8	29.2
Quebec	3,257	36.5	40.0	3,327	36.1	39.3
Ontario	5,480	26.4	28.1	5,553	26.5	27.9
Prairies	2,585	27.3	29.2	2,587	27.1	29.6
Manitoba	520	35.4	37.4	524	35.9	38.1
Saskatchewan	422	34.3	36.3	422	33.8	35.9
Alberta	1,643	22.9	24.8	1,641	22.6	25.2
British Columbia	1,811	29.1	30.6	1,838	30.4	31.8
Work status						
Full-time	11,398	31.0	33.2	11,530	31.1	33.2
Part-time	2,689	23.3	25.1	2,728	23.5	25.0
Industry						
Goods-producing	2,970	26.5	28.5	2,962	26.5	28.6
Agriculture	114	5.3	6.3	100	2.7	3.2
Natural resources	271	20.9	22.3	277	20.3	23.1
Utilities	147	62.2	67.0	146	61.6	65.5
Construction	744	30.0	31.8	801	30.3	32.0
Manufacturing	1,694	24.2	26.2	1,638	24.0	26.2
Service-producing	11,117	30.3	32.5	11,296	30.4	32.4
Trade	2,319	13.1	14.7	2,378	13.1	14.4
Transportation and warehousing	690	40.0	41.7	645	41.3	42.8
Finance, insurance, real estate and leasing	902	8.2	9.6	909	8.2	9.2
Professional, scientific and technical	786	4.3	5.2	821	4.2	5.3
Business, building and other support	490	14.6	16.2	495	14.3	16.2
Education	1,163	68.0	71.9	1,207	67.0	70.9
Health care and social assistance	1,704	54.0	56.4	1,778	52.9	55.3
Information, culture and recreation	626	26.6	28.6	625	26.9	28.3
Accommodation and food	972	7.0	7.8	978	7.0	7.8
Other	546	8.8	10.1	524	9.8	11.0
Public administration	920	67.2	72.8	935	68.5	73.4

Table 1 Union membership and coverage by selected characteristics (concluded)

	2009			2010		
		Union density			Union density	
	Total employees	Members	Coverage[1]	Total employees	Members	Coverage[1]
	'000	%	%	'000	%	%
Occupation						
Management	1,019	8.9	11.2	1,019	8.3	10.9
Business, finance and administrative	2,787	24.6	26.7	2,751	24.7	26.5
Professional	420	18.0	19.5	407	16.1	17.9
Financial and administrative	733	24.2	26.5	734	25.3	27.4
Clerical	1,634	26.5	28.7	1,610	26.6	28.3
Natural and applied sciences	1,036	22.8	24.9	1,098	22.8	24.9
Health	912	61.7	64.2	951	60.2	62.4
Professional	105	40.2	46.1	107	38.2	44.7
Nursing	273	81.5	83.1	278	78.5	80.5
Technical	216	57.5	60.0	223	59.8	61.0
Support staff	319	54.8	56.7	342	52.5	54.2
Social science, education, government	1,387	55.1	58.2	1,437	55.4	58.7
Legal, social and religious workers	683	35.9	38.4	714	37.1	40.0
Teachers and professors	704	73.7	77.4	724	73.5	77.2
Secondary and elementary	485	85.5	88.2	492	85.9	88.0
Other	219	47.5	53.7	232	47.1	54.3
Art, culture, recreation and sport	322	28.3	30.9	341	28.9	30.8
Sales and service	3,658	20.5	22.3	3,716	21.0	22.5
Wholesale	383	4.9	6.1	386	5.5	6.8
Retail	1,025	11.7	12.9	1,080	13.2	14.3
Food and beverage	531	9.9	10.8	527	10.1	10.8
Protective services	250	54.0	61.4	251	57.6	62.4
Child care and home support	195	49.6	51.2	200	45.4	48.4
Travel and accommodation	1,274	25.7	27.3	1,272	25.6	27.0
Trades, transport and equipment operators	1,968	35.6	37.6	1,968	35.4	37.4
Contractors and supervisors	140	27.2	29.6	138	29.0	30.9
Construction trades	271	38.1	39.7	283	35.7	37.2
Other trades	768	38.1	40.3	760	37.7	40.0
Transportation equipment operators	490	34.7	36.0	484	37.0	38.7
Helpers and labourers	300	32.1	34.8	303	29.5	32.2
Unique to primary industry	253	14.3	15.9	241	14.6	15.9
Unique to processing, manufacturing and utilities	745	32.1	34.3	736	31.3	33.2
Machine operators and assemblers	603	31.7	33.7	590	30.7	32.6
Labourers	143	34.0	36.9	146	33.6	35.3
Workplace size						
Under 20 employees	4,697	13.4	14.9	4,806	13.4	14.7
20 to 99 employees	4,732	30.2	32.4	4,707	29.8	32.0
100 to 500 employees	2,883	40.4	43.1	2,949	41.1	43.5
Over 500 employees	1,775	52.7	55.4	1,797	53.7	56.5
Job tenure						
1 to 12 months	3,053	16.4	18.6	2,855	16.0	18.0
Over 1 year to 5 years	4,753	23.4	25.3	4,936	24.3	26.1
Over 5 years to 9 years	2,051	32.2	34.4	2,012	31.6	33.6
Over 9 years to 14 years	1,464	34.9	36.8	1,657	36.5	38.2
Over 14 years	2,766	49.6	52.1	2,798	47.4	49.9
Job status						
Permanent	12,449	29.8	31.8	12,434	30.0	31.9
Non-permanent	1,638	27.7	30.4	1,824	27.3	29.7

1. Union members and persons who are not union members but covered by collective agreements (for example, some religious group members).
2. Public sector employees are those working for government departments or agencies; Crown corporations; or publicly funded schools, hospitals or other institutions. Private sector employees are all other wage and salary earners.

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, January-to-June averages.

2009 annual averages

Approximately 4.2 million employees (29.3%) belonged to a union in 2009 and another 296,000 (2.1%) were covered by a collective agreement (Table 2).

In the public sector, which consisted of government, Crown corporations, and publicly funded schools and hospitals, 70.9% of employees belonged to a union. This was more than four times the rate for the private sector (16.1%).

Approximately one-third of full-time employees belonged to a union, compared with about one-fourth of part-time employees. Also, almost 30% of permanent employees were union members, compared with about 27% of non-permanent employees.

Unionization rates also varied by age group, with 36.4% of those age 45 to 54 belonging to a union compared to 14.6% of those age 15 to 24. High unionization rates were also found among those with a university degree (34.0%) or a postsecondary certificate or diploma (33.2%); in Newfoundland and Labrador (37.4%) and in Quebec (36.3%); in educational services (67.6%), public administration (66.9%) and utilities (61.8%); and in health care occupations (61.5%). Low unionization rates were recorded in Alberta (22.9%); in agriculture (4.5%) and professional, scientific and technical services (4.2%); and in management occupations (9.1%).

Table 2 Union membership, 2009

	Total employees	Union member[1]	
		Total	Density
	'000	'000	%
Both sexes	**14,147**	**4,152**	**29.3**
Men	7,030	1,977	28.1
Women	7,117	2,175	30.6
Sector[2]			
Public	3,412	2,418	70.9
Private	10,735	1,734	16.1
Age			
15 to 24	2,345	343	14.6
25 to 54	9,823	3,125	31.8
25 to 44	6,430	1,889	29.4
45 to 54	3,394	1,235	36.4
55 and over	1,979	685	34.6
Education			
Less than Grade 9	285	70	24.4
Some high school	1,331	269	20.2
High school graduation	2,848	711	25.0
Some postsecondary	1,213	262	21.6
Postsecondary certificate or diploma	5,032	1,670	33.2
University degree	3,438	1,170	34.0
Province			
Atlantic	969	294	30.3
Newfoundland and Labrador	194	73	37.4
Prince Edward Island	59	18	29.9
Nova Scotia	392	115	29.4
New Brunswick	324	89	27.4
Quebec	3,280	1,192	36.3
Ontario	5,504	1,430	26.0
Prairies	2,581	700	27.1
Manitoba	523	183	34.9
Saskatchewan	421	143	33.9
Alberta	1,636	375	22.9
British Columbia	1,813	536	29.6
Work status			
Full-time	11,537	3,542	30.7
Part-time	2,610	609	23.3
Industry			
Goods-producing	3,023	807	26.7
Agriculture	118	5	4.5
Natural resources	272	59	21.7
Utilities	147	91	61.8
Construction	795	236	29.6
Manufacturing	1,690	416	24.6
Service-producing	11,125	3,345	30.1
Trade	2,338	312	13.3
Transportation and warehousing	677	271	40.1
Finance, insurance, real estate and leasing	902	74	8.2
Professional, scientific and technical	781	32	4.2
Business, building and other support	492	70	14.2
Education	1,135	767	67.6
Health care and social assistance	1,718	921	53.6
Information, culture and recreation	646	163	25.2
Accommodation and food	966	67	6.9
Other	545	48	8.8
Public administration	927	620	66.9

Differences between the sexes

For the sixth year in a row, the unionization rate for women in 2009 surpassed the rate for men (30.6% vs. 28.1%). The gap widened by 1.2 percentage points compared with 2008.

Among men, part-time employees had a much lower rate than full-time employees (19.3% versus 29.2%). Among women, the gap was narrower (25.1% versus 32.4%) (data not shown). The unionization rate for women in the public sector (73.0%) exceeded the rate for men (67.5%), reflecting women's presence in public administration, and in teaching and health positions. However, in the private sector, only 12.7% of women were unionized, compared with 19.2% of men. The lower rate among women reflected their predominance in sales and several service occupations.

A higher-than-average rate was recorded among men with a postsecondary certificate or diploma (33.0%). For women, the highest rate was among those with a university degree (40.8%), reflecting unionization in occupations like health care and teaching.

Among those in permanent positions, the rate for men (28.6%) was lower than the rate for women (30.8%). The gap was even more predominant among those in non-permanent positions (28.9% for women versus 24.5% for men).

Table 2 Union membership, 2009 (concluded)

	Total employees	Union member[1]	
		Total	Density
	'000	'000	%
Occupation			
Management	1,022	93	9.1
Business, finance and administrative	2,761	676	24.5
Professional	411	72	17.5
Financial and administrative	732	175	23.9
Clerical	1,618	429	26.5
Natural and applied sciences	1,047	243	23.2
Health	924	568	61.5
Professional	109	44	40.5
Nursing	281	227	80.8
Technical	221	127	57.5
Support staff	313	170	54.2
Social science, education, government	1,378	752	54.6
Legal, social and religious workers	687	247	35.9
Teachers and professors	691	506	73.2
Secondary and elementary	466	398	85.5
Other	226	108	47.7
Art, culture, recreation and sport	334	89	26.5
Sales and service	3,654	742	20.3
Wholesale	382	19	4.9
Retail	1,052	130	12.3
Food and beverage	524	50	9.5
Protective services	248	136	54.8
Child care and home support	182	84	45.9
Travel and accommodation	1,267	325	25.6
Trades, transport and equipment operators	2,012	703	34.9
Contractors and supervisors	141	40	28.2
Construction trades	280	103	37.0
Other trades	771	286	37.1
Transportation equipment operators	500	173	34.6
Helpers and labourers	322	101	31.3
Unique to primary industry	267	38	14.3
Unique to processing, manufacturing and utilities	747	248	33.1
Machine operators and assemblers	603	197	32.7
Labourers	144	50	34.9
Workplace size			
Under 20 employees	4,724	627	13.3
20 to 99 employees	4,732	1,404	29.7
100 to 500 employees	2,899	1,186	40.9
Over 500 employees	1,792	935	52.2
Job tenure			
1 to 12 months	2,988	486	16.3
Over 1 year to 5 years	4,849	1,132	23.3
Over 5 years to 9 years	2,053	659	32.1
Over 9 years to 14 years	1,509	529	35.1
Over 14 years	2,749	1,346	49.0
Job status			
Permanent	12,381	3,678	29.7
Non-permanent	1,766	473	26.8

1. Excludes non-members covered by a collective agreement.
2. Public sector employees are those working for government departments or agencies; Crown corporations; or publicly funded schools, hospitals or other institutions. Private sector employees are all other wage and salary earners.

Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey.

Average earnings and usual hours

Earnings are generally higher in unionized than non-unionized jobs. Factors other than collective bargaining provisions contribute to this. These include varying distributions of unionized employees by age, sex, job tenure, industry, occupation, firm size, and geographical location. The effects of these factors are not examined here. However, unionized workers and jobs clearly have characteristics that are associated with higher earnings. For example, unionization is higher for older workers, those with more education, those with long tenure, and those in larger workplaces. Still, a wage premium exists, which, after controlling for employee and workplace characteristics, has been estimated at 7.7% (Fang and Verma 2002).

Average hourly earnings of unionized workers were higher than those of non-unionized workers in 2009 (Table 3). This held true for both full-time employees ($25.93 versus $22.35) and part-time employees ($21.25 versus $13.71). Unionized part-time employees not only had higher hourly earnings, but they also worked more (19.2 hours versus 16.7 hours). This led to a larger gap in weekly earnings ($414.55 versus $236.19).

Table 3 Average earnings and usual hours by union and job status, 2009

	Hourly earnings			Usual weekly hours, main job		
	All employees	Full-time	Part-time	All employees	Full-time	Part-time
		$			hours	
Both sexes	22.05	23.52	15.57	35.2	39.2	17.3
Union member	25.24	25.93	21.25	35.6	38.4	19.2
Union coverage[1]	25.20	25.90	21.14	35.6	38.5	19.1
Not a union member[2]	20.61	22.35	13.71	35.0	39.6	16.7
Men	23.87	25.05	14.66	37.7	40.4	16.5
Union member	26.00	26.58	19.26	37.9	39.6	18.1
Union coverage[1]	26.00	26.58	19.19	37.9	39.6	17.9
Not a union member[2]	22.95	24.35	13.46	37.6	40.8	16.1
Women	20.25	21.71	15.97	32.7	37.9	17.7
Union member	24.54	25.24	21.92	33.5	37.2	19.6
Union coverage[1]	24.46	25.16	21.81	33.5	37.2	19.5
Not a union member[2]	18.22	19.89	13.83	32.4	38.2	17.0
Atlantic	18.93	19.95	13.46	36.6	40.3	17.3
Union member	23.37	23.66	20.76	37.4	39.4	19.8
Union coverage[1]	23.36	23.65	20.70	37.4	39.4	19.7
Not a union member[2]	16.86	18.05	11.62	36.3	40.7	16.7
Quebec	20.80	22.04	15.23	34.4	38.1	18.1
Union member	23.65	24.09	20.90	35.1	37.5	20.3
Union coverage[1]	23.48	23.93	20.60	35.1	37.5	20.1
Not a union member[2]	19.03	20.67	12.93	34.0	38.5	17.3
Ontario	22.75	24.48	15.25	35.2	39.4	17.0
Union member	26.53	27.58	20.55	35.6	38.6	18.4
Union coverage[1]	26.58	27.64	20.54	35.7	38.7	18.3
Not a union member[2]	21.30	23.20	13.74	35.0	39.6	16.6
Prairies	23.20	24.61	16.58	36.1	40.1	17.3
Union member	25.82	26.49	22.20	36.0	39.1	19.1
Union coverage[1]	25.84	26.49	22.31	36.1	39.2	19.1
Not a union member[2]	22.12	23.81	14.60	36.1	40.5	16.7
British Columbia	22.21	23.69	16.64	34.6	39.3	17.1
Union member	25.60	26.27	22.48	35.1	38.6	18.9
Union coverage[1]	25.63	26.34	22.27	35.2	38.7	18.8
Not a union member[2]	20.68	22.42	14.66	34.4	39.6	16.5

1. Union members and persons who are not union members but covered by collective agreements (for example, some religious group members).
2. Workers who are neither union members nor covered by collective agreements.
Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey.

On average, full-time unionized women earned 95% of the amount their male counterparts earned per hour. In contrast, those working part time earned 14% more.

Wage settlements, inflation and labour disputes

The wage rate increase for collective agreement negotiated in 2009 was lower than the previous year (2.4% versus 3.2%) (Table 4). This was the fifth consecutive year in which the increase in wages surpassed the rate of inflation. For the fourth year in a row, the wage gain in the public sector exceeded the gain in the private sector (2.5% versus 1.8%). This trend continued in the first four months of 2010 whereby gains stood at 2.2% in the public sector and 1.9% in the private sector.

Table 4 Major wage settlements, inflation and labour disputes

	Average annual increase in base wage rates[1]				Labour disputes and time lost[2]			
Year	Public sector employees[3]	Private sector employees[3]	Total employees	Annual change in consumer price index[1]	Strikes and lockouts[4]	Workers involved	Person-days not worked	Proportion of estimated working time
			%			'000	'000	%
1980	10.9	11.7	11.1	10.0	1,028	452	9,130	0.37
1981	13.1	12.7	13.0	12.5	1,049	342	8,850	0.35
1982	10.4	9.5	10.2	10.9	679	464	5,702	0.23
1983	4.6	5.5	4.8	5.8	645	330	4,441	0.18
1984	3.9	3.2	3.6	4.3	716	187	3,883	0.15
1985	3.8	3.3	3.7	4.0	829	164	3,126	0.12
1986	3.6	3.0	3.4	4.1	748	486	7,151	0.27
1987	4.1	3.8	4.0	4.4	668	582	3,810	0.14
1988	4.0	5.0	4.4	3.9	548	207	4,901	0.17
1989	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.1	627	445	3,701	0.13
1990	5.6	5.7	5.6	4.8	579	271	5,516	0.09
1992	2.0	2.6	2.1	1.4	404	152	2,110	0.07
1993	0.6	0.8	0.7	1.9	381	102	1,517	0.05
1994	0.0	1.2	0.3	0.1	374	81	1,607	0.06
1995	0.6	1.4	0.9	2.2	328	149	1,583	0.05
1996	0.5	1.7	0.9	1.5	330	276	3,269	0.11
1997	1.1	1.8	1.4	1.7	284	258	3,608	0.12
1998	1.6	1.8	1.7	1.0	381	244	2,440	0.08
1999	1.9	2.7	2.2	1.8	413	160	2,441	0.08
2000	2.5	2.4	2.5	2.7	378	143	1,644	0.05
2001	3.4	3.0	3.3	2.5	381	221	2,203	0.07
2002	2.9	2.6	2.8	2.2	294	166	2,986	0.09
2003	2.9	1.2	2.5	2.8	266	79	1,730	0.05
2004	1.4	2.3	1.8	1.8	297	259	3,185	0.09
2005	2.3	2.5	2.3	2.2	260	199	4,148	0.11
2006	2.6	2.2	2.5	2.0	151	42	793	0.02
2007	3.4	3.2	3.3	2.2	206	66	1,771	0.05
2008	3.5	2.5	3.2	2.3	188	41	876	0.02
2009	2.5	1.8	2.4	0.3	157	67	2,179	0.06
2010[5]	2.2	1.9	2.1	1.7	..	..	..	..

1. Involving 500 or more employees.
2. Involving 1 worker or more.
3. Public sector employees are those working for government departments or agencies; Crown corporations; or publicly funded schools, hospitals or other institutions. Private sector employees are all other wage and salary earners.
4. Minimum of ten person-days not worked.
5. 2010 data refer to January to April only.

Sources: Statistics Canada, Prices Division; Human Resources and Social Development Canada, Workplace Information Directorate.

Annual statistics on strikes, lockouts and person–days lost are affected by several factors, including collective bargaining timetables, size of the unions involved, strike or lockout duration, and state of the economy. The number of collective agreements up for renewal in a given year determines the potential for industrial disputes. Union size and strike or lockout duration determine the number of person–days lost. The state of the economy influences the likelihood of an industrial dispute, given that one is legally possible. The proportion of estimated working time lost due to strikes and lockouts increased to 0.06% in 2009 from 0.02% in 2008.

Perspectives

Reference

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